



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA Forest Service
Cherokee National Forest
2800 Ocoee Street N.
Cleveland, TN 37312
Web: <http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

News Release



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Some Areas of Cherokee National Forest Closing

Hurricane Florence - Cherokee National Forest

CLEVELAND, TENN, September 13, 2018 – The USDA Forest Service is closely tracking the forecast models of Hurricane Florence. It has been determined that it is necessary to close all developed (improved facilities) campgrounds and certain other areas in the northern portion (Unaka and Watauga ranger districts) of Cherokee National Forest by Friday September 14 at 12 noon. Sites will be evaluated for health and safety and reopened as conditions allow following the storm passage.

The closures are being implement in the interest of public health and safety. Forest Service officials at the Cherokee National Forest strongly recommend that, due to expected wind and rainfall, the public not use trails or general forest areas. Emergency response times will be multiplied if an incident or medical emergency were to occur.

Excessive rain and high wind have the potential to create high water, flash floods, falling trees, mudslides, and severe damage to facilities and roads. Much of the Cherokee National Forest is heavily forested, remote and mountainous, making the potential for hazardous conditions significant.

Anyone planning a visit anywhere in the Cherokee National Forest should seriously consider postponing their visit until the threat of Florence diminishes.

For outdoor safety information visit:
https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r8/home/?cid=fsbdev3_066387

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The following areas in Cherokee National Forest will be closed at noon on Friday September 14, 2018. This will include the temporary suspension of creating reservations on www.recreation.gov. Cancelled reservations, for this timeframe, will be refunded by the reservation service.

Watauga Ranger District (northeast Tennessee -Carter, Sullivan, and Johnson counties):

Developed areas

- Backbone Rock Campground
- Backbone Rock Recreation Area Pavilions
- Little Oak Campground
- Jacob's Creek Campground
- Jacob's Creek Day Use Area
- Jacob's Creek Shooting Range
- Dennis Cove Campground
- Shook Branch Day Use Area
- Rat Branch Boat Ramp
- Pond Mountain Shooting Range
- Watauga Point Recreation Area
- Little Milligan Boat Ramp
- The Laurels Picnic Area Pavilions

Dispersed areas

- Little Stoney Camping Area
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Unaka Ranger District (northeast Tennessee – Cocke, Unicoi and Greene counties):

Developed areas

- Round Mountain
- Houston Valley
- Bubbling Springs Shooting Range
- Paint Creek
- Horse Creek
- Rock Creek
- Chestoa
- Scioto Shooting Range
- Round Knob
- Old Forge
- Limestone Cove

Dispersed areas

- Weaver's Bend
- Paint Creek Corridor
- Courtland Place

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Cherokee National Forest Supervisor JaSal Morris said, “We are implementing this closure for public safety concerns. With the uncertainty of the extent of impacts from Hurricane Florence we believe this closure is prudent and necessary. Depending on the path of Florence it may be necessary to close additional areas.

I’d like to emphasize that if you are planning a visit to any portion of the Cherokee National Forest in the next several days you should seriously consider postponing your visit until the threat of Florence in this area diminishes.

Our highest priority is employee and national forest visitor safety. The closure will be lifted as soon as the storm threat has passed and damage assessments are completed.”

For information about conditions in Cherokee National Forest call any of the following Forest Service offices:

- Forest Supervisor’s Office – Cleveland, TN: 423-476-9700
- Ocoee Ranger District – Benton, TN: 423-338-3300
- Ocoee Whitewater Center – Copperhill, TN: 423-496-0100
- Tellico Ranger District – Tellico Plains, TN: 423-253-8400
- Unaka Ranger District – Greeneville, TN: 423-638-4109
- Watauga Ranger District – Unicoi, TN: 423-735-1500

Visit online at: <http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

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